



A.G. on Ag
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An Update from Secretary Kawamura

July 2006: Farm Bill, Budget Benefits, Pest Projects

This has been a very interesting month at CDFA for several reasons. For starters, we have been touring the state seeking input on the 2007 farm bill. This is an opportunity to influence a true 21st Century Farm Bill. Turnout at these recent sessions was excellent as was the testimony offered by the public and agricultural industry. We listened to the concerns of farmers, conservationists, nutritionists, food bank managers and community members, including children. *Have we heard from you?* Our grand finale will be on **August 1 at the state Capitol, room 4202**. I invite and encourage you to participate in this final session. Do not underestimate the influence your comments may have on this policy. California plays an important role in our national health and security, and your comments will help our department refocus the nation's understanding of food, fiber and fuel in the current round of farm bill debates. Please visit the CDFA farm bill website www.cdfa.ca.gov/egov/farmbill/ for registration, legislation information, scheduled events, updated news and public testimony. You may also choose to submit your comments via the website by August 1.

I'm pleased to report the [2006-07 state budget](#) has many benefits for agriculture, the environment and the citizens of California. Some highlights include:

- \$6.5 million general fund for a one-year statewide survey of the destructive diaprepes root weevil as well as a one-year quarantine and eradication project in Newport Beach, Long Beach, La Jolla and other known infested areas in San Diego County. Already, 245,000 "weevil alert" postcards have been mailed to homeowners, asking for their assistance in fighting this pest. Another 1.5 million cards will be sent later this year. Ads will also be placed in major state newspapers.



CDFA biologist Kris Godfrey inspects a root weevil-infested citrus tree in San Diego County. Photo: E. Grafton-Cardwell / UCR



Bridget Luther, Director of the Department of Conservation, California Resources Agency, and Eric Lauritzen, Monterey County Agriculture Commissioner, with Secretary Kawamura at the Salinas Farm Bill Listening Session. Photo: J. Henderson / CDFA

- \$3 million general fund/local assistance for high-risk pest exclusion to support county agricultural commissioner efforts to exclude new pests and diseases from invading California's agricultural and natural environment. Distribution will be based on the need of counties with high-risk pathways, such as airports, distribution terminals, etc.

- \$1.5 million general fund to leverage federal and local monies for county agricultural commissioners to control the spread and impact of invasive weeds such as [star thistle](#). Significant activities will be focused on parts of the state where weed control will have the most economic impact, such as Northern California, the I-80 and US 50 corridors and critical Southern California areas.
- Increased funding to coordinate animal disease testing in urban communities with backyard farm animals.
- Investment in technology for better information management during a disease outbreak.
- Investment in veterinary research scientists to develop disease control policies that are based on current science.
- Support for a personnel protection program to safeguard the health of CDFA first responders.
- \$5.2 million and 23 positions to support planning, rapid detection and response, protection and safety measures to address emerging threats, including bioterrorism, the [H5N1 avian influenza](#) and other animal diseases.
- Increased funding to educate owners of backyard farm animals about disease control methods.



Secretary Kawamura watches station manager Deny Day (r) and plant quarantine inspector Tim Burt (l) sample mango fruit at the Blythe border station on I-10. This year to date, CDFA agricultural inspection stations have prevented more than 150 major plant pests found in mangos from entering the state. Photo: J. Connell / CDFA

The primary responsibilities of our Pest Detection/Emergency Projects Branch are early detection and eradication of serious agricultural pests new to California. The branch places exotic insect traps into nearly 500,000 residential properties each year. In September 2005, a [Diaprepes root weevil](#) was detected in a gypsy moth trap in Newport Beach. To treat this and other weevil infestations, branch specialists treat all sites where this pest has been detected; they will soon be conducting statewide surveys to locate and eliminate any other infestations of this weevil.

As always, thank you for your support and don't hesitate to contact my office with any questions or concerns.

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Placer County Rodeo 2006 Photo: E. Williams / CDFA